1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142 individuals. The prognathous jaw is common, but far from universal; and one fairly often meets fair individuals with pointed faces tapering towards the chin. Young girls are frequently [304] graceful, light in colour, and, but for the disfigurements of tattooing, often pretty; but with age and child-bearing, long journeys to the market and heavy field work, they soon coarsen and darken. [551] Colour varies from nearly black to pale copper; but really black skins are uncommon enough to give rise to names or nicknames. The copper complexion is perhaps commoner among the Bison-horn than the Hill Marias, but the really pale copper face is more often met in the hills. Lips are full rather than thick. Eyes are almost invariably brown; I have met occasional individuals with grey or greenish-grey eyes accompanied by hair of a dirty rust colour and light complexions. The hair is black and generally straight, but many have natural waves that would do credit to European coiffeurs, and a few have naturally frizzy hair. Some young 'bloods' [302] among the Bison-horn Marias seem to have artificially curled hair. [164] The teeth are usually worn down, discoloured and neglected, and caries is common. The richer Bison-horn headmen sometimes have [304] small gold plugs, the size of a pin's head, inserted in the front of their upper front teeth.

[516] The bodies are usually well developed, and the easy, upright carriage of the Maria displays to advantage his good chest, buttocks and calves. The Hill Maria seldom if ever carries

482 **Physical powers and endurance** weights on his head, but on his left shoulder, supported by his left arm bent over the top of his burden. Actually he regards the woman as the natural carrier, as may be seen when he goes with her to the market, and almost the only time when he may be seen carrying loads is when he acts as a carrier for a touring official. It is actually recorded that at one time he used to send his women for this work; but he has long given this up, possibly through experience of the less pleasant ways of subordinate State servants. Young hill girls and women carry heavy baskets or leaf-boxes of grain, logs of wood, water-pots or other weights on their heads, generally supporting the burden with their left hands holding its upper edge above their heads. With 439 loads of grain for sale, and perhaps piles of baskets, brooms or mats, 484 the Hill Maria housewife will go once a month to the bazaar, often from thirty-five to forty miles away, in the plains, while her menfolk take nothing but bow and arrow or, very occasionally, big baskets ● [462] made for storing grain, which only males may make. From Kurmer, for example, on the Kutru-Antagarh border where the hill-streams begin to flow south to the Indrawati, they go thirty-nine miles to the market at Dhaurai, between Narainpur and Chhota

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Page 86. Col. E. Clementi Smith, who commanded the detachment of troops which was sent to Bastar at the time of the 1910 rebellion, writes to me that in those days the Marias made arrow-heads of bone and porcupine quills as well as of iron. He adds, 'Another thing I remember was the dislike of a guide, when moving along jungle tracks, if one came to a cock's head stuck on a stick—the guide always said "one couldn't go there". The same objection also arose if one came to thin boughs bent over the track and intertwined. I need hardly say that we couldn't stop for these signs and one used to kick them out of the way—I think the guides expected the heavens to fall on us for such desecration. Another thing I remember was that salt was more acceptable as payment than pice. We had a lot of our "enemy" enrolled as porters at one time. They hardly ever deserted. The sepoys liked them and I am always glad to know that we never caused any casualties among them.' For Col. Clementi Smith's account of the Bastar rebellion, see *Man in India*, Vol. XXV, pp. 240-53.

Page 113, *line* 35. The real taboo is not so much on intercourse inside a house as on a bed. At Komhu I was told by the Hill Marias that 'no woman may sleep on a cot, for the village Pen is in it'. The Bison-horn Marias and even the Raj Gonds have the same rule. A wealthy Gond Zamindar is said to have made a platform of earth for his wife, as he would not allow her a bed.

Page 135, *line* 14. The Hill Marias do actually avoid their wives (how astonished the Baigas would be at the idea!) from the time when the *kosra* shoots appear until the threshing is over. They control themselves, they told me at Itulnar, 'by tying their cloth very tight'.

Pages 135-7. Though there is some division of labour between men and women, Bison-horn Maria women are much freer to share the work of men than are the women of many other tribes. They are allowed, for example, to plough—a thing strictly taboo to the Gonds of the Central Provinces. But they must not carry loads on a *kawar*-pole, for if they do Dongar Pen and the Rau will be offended and bring misfortune on them. They may reap a crop, but they must not tie it in bundles or lift it on to their heads with their own hands; a man must do it for them or there may be a scarcity the following year. Women may climb trees, but not near a house; they may fish, but not hunt. They may not winnow, but they can thresh with their feet (there is an illustration of this in *Maria Murder and Suicide*) and may beat out a *mandia* crop with long poles. Men, on the other hand, may not husk rice or clean it in a fan; they should not grind, nor should they carry pitchers

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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on their heads. They must not remove rice from the Pot of the Departed.

Page 169, *line* 33. Of the 100 cases of homicide examined in *Maria Murder and Suicide* 13 were due to intoxication by rice-beer and 6 to other liquors. In a further 14 cases of which Grigson kept notes, *landa*-intoxication led to 2 murders and other intoxicants to 3.

Page 174, *line* 5. The Murias still remember this camp and recall how Sir Montague Butler gave one of the headmen a ten rupee note as a present. That was seventeen years ago, when ten rupee notes were seldom seen. The Muria showed the note to a Forest Guard and asked him what it was. The Guard offered to buy it for a rupee, saying that was all it was worth. The Muria accepted the bargain and went off full of gratitude to the kindly Guard but doubtful of the Governor's generosity in giving him such a small reward. Quite recently a Mussalman merchant of Narayanpur was prosecuted for cheating a Muria with coloured labels which he declared were hundred rupee notes.

Page 174, *line* 9. At Dugeli I saw in 1942 a small carefully-fenced enclosure round a group of plantain trees, among which was a tall plant not unlike a sugar cane, which I was told was the 'Baiha Danda' and was used as an antidote to the bite of a mad dog. It was grown entirely for this purpose, in case the emergency should arise.

Page 174, *line* 15. The custom of blowing away disease may be illustrated by the experience of Oyami Harma of Bara Harma-munda. 'Once when I was working in my fields with some labourers I had employed, they performed magic against me and a lot of mud went into my mouth and filled my whole body. The Waddai discovered what had happened and cured me by blowing the mud out of my stomach. Another day, some people came to ask for rice. I refused at first, but they persisted and at last I had to let them have some. But they were annoyed with me and with my own rice they made hostile magic and filled my belly with it. The Waddai cured me by blowing it out.' Sucking is also practised. A Siraha places his lips on a patient's stomach and sucks. If he finds only blood in his mouth, it means a Rau has sent the disease; if there is a little earth with the blood, it indicates the Earth Mother.

Page 182, *line* 24. I have seen split-string instruments similar to the *vaddur-dol* among the Bondos and Saoras in Orissa, as well as among the Jhoria-Murias; they have been noticed for the Reddis by C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *The Reddis of the Bison Hills*, p. 348. Meerwarth reports that they are common in Malaya and Indonesia

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
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is only a little to be done, the crop is piled round the pole and boys thrash it there: otherwise a bamboo rail is tied to the post and perhaps supported by another on the circumference of the thrashing-floor. A line of men hold on to the rail, sometimes there are two lines on either side, and so they thrash. I have not seen them go round and round in procession, as the Baiga do.

A rich man with many fields often employs the chelik to work for him, but it is *polo* (taboo) for the motiari to help in the thrashing.

It is also taboo for women to winnow. A chelik stands on the thrashing-floor and gently shakes the grain from a basket held high above his head: the wind carries the chaff away. Sometimes another man fans the falling grain with a winnowing-fan or big basket and they generally fan the pile of grain to remove any chaff that may have settled on it.

Boys fan bride and bridegroom at a wedding in just the same way after giving them their ceremonial bath.

When the work is complete, the Kada Marenga ceremony is performed, and offerings are made to the Village Mother.

Storing the Grain

The Muria do not make corporate granaries, but especially in the west each large house has a special granary, raised on pillars from the ground.

In the house, the dhusir-bin made of paddy rope is often used. A network of siari cords is laid on the ground. On this the Muria coil paddy rope anti-clockwise to about two feet diameter, lay paddy straw on this, pour on grain, wind the rope round, gradually build it up, pour in more grain, pound it down with a husker and tie it. At the top they place a ring of siari cord and slip the ropes through it. Then they beat indentations into the top of the bin and tie the cords along them. This bin is aptly described as the 'boy who binds a cloth tightly round his waist'.

Special bins are made for the unthrashed mandia in the *bari*. Square boxes are made of date-palm leaves tied to a wooden frame and bound round and round with rope, supported by poles above the ground. The bin is filled with the mandia and closed with grass at the top. Sometimes the walls are of matting.

The New Eating Ceremonies

Before there can be any general use either of crops or the various forms of jungle produce, there must be the appropriate Korta Tindana, or First Eating ceremony, a sort of Harvest Thanksgiving in honour of the earth which has given the crop. The ceremonies at all these are alike, except for the different fruits or grains that form the bulk of the feast; I describe a typical Marka Pandum at Masora in Chapter VII, and need do no more here than give a list of the chief festivals.

Irpu Pandum (February-March). The ceremonial gathering of the first fruits of the mahua tree, and a feast at which some of them are eaten.

Marka Pandum (March). A ceremonial feast of the first mangoes and any other wild fruit that may be ready, such as tendu, char or karmata.

Korum Pandum (August). The first eating of the small grains and millets.

Korta or *Pona Pandum* (September). The first eating of the new rice, together with gourds and cucumbers.

Jata Pandum (December-January). Often called Pupal Pandum, the first eating of pulses and beans, and use of sesamum and castor oil.

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custom that the man who goes to the trouble of tapping the tree, protecting it with thorns, and making a bamboo ladder, has a right over it, especially when it is growing far away in the forest. The trees are not taxed but the villagers are not allowed to sell the juice. Disputes simply arise over the right to take the liquor for personal use.

The salphi juice, however, is not generally so intoxicating as to cause quarrels in the same degree as landa rice-beer or mahua spirit. Bedford's *Technical Excise Manual* (par. 263) gives some account of the comparative alcoholic strengths of these drinks. 'The alcoholic strength of toddy varies according to the nature of the palm tapped, the season of the year, the time for which it has been drawn and other circumstances. The average results of a number of tests made with toddy from all parts of the Madras Presidency were:

		Percentage by Volume
Coconut ..	.. 85·7° U.P.	8·1
Palmyra ..	.. 90·8° U.P.	5·2
Date ..	.. 91·4° U.P.	4·9
Sago ..	.. 89·6° U.P.	5·9

Toddy exposed for sale in Bengal in 1909 was found generally to range in alcoholic strength from about 93° to 94° U.P. When reasonably fresh it has a food value somewhat comparable with that of well-made malt beer.' The average strength of landa rice-beer may be taken at about 85° U.P. (8·6% by volume). Mahua spirit is much stronger—*rasi* may be sold at strengths of 50° to 70° U.P. and *phuli* of 5° to 35° U.P. The average for *rasi* is 60° U.P. (22·8% by volume) and for *phuli* 25° U.P. (42·8%).

XIII

With all these varied economic and social activities how far do chelik and motiari meet one another during the day? Does tribal custom allow them to share the same tasks or are the functions of men and women sharply differentiated?

The girls, of course, have the major part of the house-work to see to. They cook, bring water, clean the buildings with cow-dung and whitewash, husk the grain, grind wheat or spices. They generally make the *mansi* mats, tie grass into brooms, prepare leaf-plates and cups. In the house a woman must not climb on the roof and she must not take grain out of the dhusir grain-bin, although it may only be removed at her command. A motiari before the menarche may go into the room where the Pot of the Departed is kept, but not afterwards—for she is going to join another clan and has no part with these ancestors; her spirit will mingle with those of her husband's family.

The chelik, on the other hand, have comparatively little to do in the house. They may cook and bring water when the womenfolk are in their periods; they have the business of erecting the framework of the building which the girls will later plaster with mud, and they thatch the roof.

But their main work is outside. In male hands is all the business of the fields and forest. They make and use the ploughs; they cut wood for fuel or cultivation; they embank the fields; they tend the cattle, make and drive their carts; they go to hunt and fish; they watch the crops and thrash and winnow them.

Yet there remain many chances for sharing of labour between chelik and motiari. A boy does not always see his motiari in the dark. Both can repair

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the embankment of a field, both can join in spreading brushwood over a clearing.

A motiari can put her hand to a plough and help her chelik in the long labour of the furrow. She can go with her chelik to the forest for wood and she can help him carry it, but she must not use an axe, though she may break bits of wood with her hands or feet. She may not kill anything, yet she can join the beat for small game and she may fix a trap in the river and bale water out so that the boys can catch the fish. But she must not use a bow and arrow, or a knife, or thrust the plunge-traps into the water.

FIG. 14. *Baras* or *talli* used for cutting up meat and planing wood
Length of upright 9"

A motiari, once she is mature, must not sleep on a machan to watch the fields. She must never go with a boy to sleep there—if she does a tiger will shake it and perhaps kill them both. In some villages, she may cow-dung the thrashing-floor, provided it is of her own clan, but she cannot thrash with her feet, or winnow the grain from a fan though she may do it with her hands. She must not sow seeds of rice or millet, though she does sometimes sow beans and vegetables.

The motiari gather mahua flowers with the boys; they collect myrabolams, and extract oil. Very important, they take food to the boys while they are working in the fields. This is a constant motive of romance in folk-tales.

The motiari may attend a funeral and most of the festivals. At the New Eating ceremonies they prepare the plates and cups for the feast, and are eager spectators of the ceremonies. They dance at most festivals with the boys. But I know of no Muria women Siraha-mediums or Gunia-diviners, though these are not unknown in Chhattisgarh. I am told, however, that there is a female Siraha of Pendrawandin in Gudabera, and there is a tradition that in former times it was the women who sacrificed to the gods. 'In those days, they used to cut the tail instead of the head and the bird or animal instead of dying would escape. Men soon got annoyed at this and said, "You women do not know how to do it; from now we will sacrifice". Men then began to cut off the heads of the birds and animals and the sacrifices were complete. This is why women do not eat the head of any bird or animal offered to the gods. They said to their husbands, "Now the head is yours, ours is the tail".

There are not many absolute taboos. A man must not husk grain or grind it. He must not wash women's clothes or wear them—except at night. Girls must not wear boys' turbans and clothes except on ceremonial occasions.

On the whole, Muria economy provides many opportunities for boys and girls to work together in the open air. This is one reason why their relations remain so fresh and healthy.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE CRIMES OF WOMEN

I

674 171 It is notorious that women are everywhere less criminal than men. 'The proportion varies, however, greatly in different countries. In France it is usually about 4 to 1; in the United States it is about 12 to 1; in Italy and Spain the proportion of women is very small. In Great Britain, on the other hand, the proportion of criminal women is extremely large, especially for the greater crimes'.[1] In Bastar the proportion is 23 men to 1 woman.

674 Havelock Ellis points out that woman is protected from crime by certain physical and psychological characteristics—her physical weakness, sexual selection, domestic seclusion, prostitution and maternity. Among Maria women, however, the only one of these forms of protection to operate is maternity. The women are often of considerable physical strength and are as capable of striking a murderous blow with an axe as are the men. Since every Maria woman is married, sexual selection is of no assistance in removing from the place of danger and temptation the more degenerate and abnormal types.

462 562 As far as the domestic seclusion of women is concerned, the Maria situation resembles that in the Baltic provinces of Russia of former days, where the women shared the occupations of men and the level of feminine criminality was comparatively high. In England also, which has taken the lead in enlarging the sphere of women's work, 'the level of feminine criminality has for half a century been rising'. The Maria woman is not only free to assist her husband in the tasks of daily life, but she also frequently participates in those very occasions which are regarded as most provocative to murder, the drinking parties when large quantities of rice-beer are consumed. [548] There is no prostitution among the Maria. But on the other hand women do not, as in Europe, fall out of the social ranks.

[1] Havelock Ellis, op. cit., pp. 261 f.

[p. 161]